Pietermaritzburg
Station

7th June 1893

In 1939 Mahatma Gandhi recalled:

. . . one experience that changed the course of life. That fell to my lot seven days after I had arrived in South Africa. I had gone there on a purely mundane and selfish mission. I was just a boy returned from England, wanting to make some money. Suddenly the client who had taken me there asked me to go to Pretoria from Durban. It was not an easy journey. There was the railway journey as far as Charlestown and the coach to Johannesburg. On the train I had a first-class ticket, but not a bed ticket. At Maritzburg when the beds were issued, the guard came and turned me out, and asked me to go into the van compartment. I would not go, and the train steamed away leaving me shivering in the cold. Now the creative experience comes there. I was afraid for my very life. I entered the dark waiting-room. There was a white man in the room. I was afraid of him. What was my duty? I asked myself. Should I go back to India, or should I go forward, with God as my helper and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that date.

This plaque was unveiled by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius,

Dr The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam

on the 18th February, 1998